

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 MOSCOW 01434 311522Z

ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3653

S E C R E T MOSCOW 1434

NODIS CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM TOON

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT'S LETTER TO BREZHNEV

REF: STATE 020929

1. FIRST, LET ME WELCOME YOU BACK TO STATE, THIS TIME AT ITS HELM. WHILE I WOULD VALUE AN EARLY MEETING WITH YOU, I RECOGNIZE THAT PRESSURES ON YOUR TIME AS YOU BEGIN YOUR ARDUOUS DUTIES MAY COMPEL DEFERRAL UNTIL YOUR VISIT HERE IN THE SPRING. I HOPE NOT.

2. MEANWHILE, IT WAS HELPFUL TO BE INFORMED OVER THE WEEKEND OF THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER TO BREZHNEV. AS YOU MAY HAVE BEEN TOLD BY HENRY KISSINGER, I FEEL STRONGLY THAT TO BE EFFECTIVE AN AMBASSADOR MUST BE FULLY APPRISED OF ALL ESCHANGES AT ALL LEVELS BETWEEN HIS GOVERNMENT AND THE COUNTRY TO WHICH HE IS ACCREDITED. THIS REQUIRES A SPECIAL EFFORT WHERE FOR VARIOUS REASONS AN UNUSUAL DEGREE OF INTIMACY HAS COME TO FEATURE THE RELATIONS BETWEEN ITS FOREIGN AMBASSADOR AND HIS WASHINGTON HOSTS. I HAVE IN MIND, OF COURSE, DOBRYNIN AND DINITZ AND SINCE I HAVE BEEN THE OPPOSITE NUMBER OF BOTH MY OBSERVATIONS ARE NOT WHOLLY ACADEMIC. I THINK IT IS BEYOND QUESTION THAT WITH AN ACTIVE, INFORMED AMBASSADOR IN TEL AVAV--AS WAS THE CASE DURING MY STEWARDSHIP--OUR RELATIONS

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WITH ISRAEL WERE MORE SOUNDLY BASED, OUR POSITIONS BETTER UNDERSTOOD BY THE ISRAELIS, AND FEWER MISUNDERSTANDINGS OCCURED. I BELIEVE IT WOULD WORK TO OUR ADVANTAGE TO VIEW THE MOSCOW MISSION IN SIMILAR TERMS.

3. THUS, I WAS SOMEWHAT DISTURBED TO DISCOVER THAT THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER WAS "DELIVERED TO THE SOVIET EMBASSY ON JANUARY 26". IN

MY VIEW, A MESSAGE OF THIS IMPORTANCE--ESPECIALLY SINCE IT IS THE FIRST FROM OUR NEW PRESIDENT--SHOULD HAVE BEEN PERSONALLY HANDED TO BREZHNEV--OR AT LEAST TO GROMYKO--BY THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR IN MOSCOW. THIS MODUS OPERANDI IS ESPECIALLY HELPFUL IN MOSCOW WHERE ACCESS TO THE TOP LEADERSHIP IS NOT EASY AND GENERALLY REQUIRES AN EFFECTIVE PEG. (MY BRITISH COLLEAGUE, FOR EXAMPLE, IN HIS 18 MONTHS IN MOSCOW HAS NEVER SEEN BREZHNEV, ENCOUNTERED KOSYGIN ONLY AT HUGE RECEPTIONS, AND MET WITH GROMYKO FOR PROTOCOLARY REASONS AFTER ARRIVAL.)

4. I HOPE YOU WILL NOT VIEW WHAT I HAVE SAID AS THE COMPLAINT OF A TRADITIONALIST. YOU WILL HAVE LEARNED FROM YOUR COLLEAGUES THAT AS AN AMBASSADOR I AM FAR FROM BEING A TRADITIONALIST AND I SELDOM COMPLAIN. BUT I AM CONCERNED THAT WE HAVE AN EFFECTIVE VOICE IN MOSCOW, AND I AM CONFIDENT THAT YOU WILL HAVE NO QUARREL WITH THIS. TOON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, AMBASSADORS, DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATIONS, DIPLOMATIC PROTOCOL, CAT-B, CHEROKEE 01/31/77
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 31-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977MOSCOW01434
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: P840076-0996
Format: TEL
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t1977013/aaaaabyp.tel
Line Count: 78
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 58fb60d3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: 77 STATE 20929
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3536357
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESIDENT'S LETTER TO BREZHNEV
TAGS: PFOR, PREL, PPDC, PDIP, UR, (TOON, MALCOLM)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/58fb60d3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009